

Annual Report of the Orthodox Mission in Plattsburgh, New York
Archpriest Terenti Wasielewski, administrator
October 3, 2023

At the request of a few Orthodox from the Plattsburgh region, Archbishop Michael gave permission to hold a Divine Liturgy on April 30, 2022. Ten people gathered at the Memorial Chapel at the former Air Force Chapel to celebrate a Paschal Liturgy, the first ever Orthodox Liturgy in the Plattsburgh area. The group wanted to continue to have periodic services but felt the summer would be a bad time to try to get people together. The group wanted to begin in the Fall of 2022. The other concern was a building that would fit the Orthodox Liturgy better. The group also discussed different strategies for the future.

During the summer, we explored these ideas and we inquired with various churches in the area to see if a small Orthodox community would be welcomed to use their facilities. We were fortunate that the United Methodist Church responded to our inquiry and invited us to use their sanctuary. Their sanctuary allowed for a mobile iconostasis and their altar could be used for a proper Orthodox Liturgy.

We began to hold monthly Divine Liturgies every fourth Saturday of each month unless there was a conflict with the United Methodist Church's schedule. Our first Divine Liturgy was held in the United Methodist Church in November and each month afterwards. We now have an email list of 27 people and currently have 1 catechumen who will be received into the church during the Christmas season. Each month attendance has increased. After each service, the group had a small brunch with discussion about how to get the word out to the community. The following topics have been discussed:

1. Name for the mission
2. Creating a website
3. Placing newspaper ads in papers
4. Creating posters to be placed in public buildings
5. Creating a bank account
6. Inviting His Eminence to Plattsburgh to celebrate the Liturgy

1. Name for the Mission

Each person was asked to submit suggestions for a name for the mission. We decided that an "ethnic" sounding name would not be a good choice for a church in the area. Several names have been put forward, a total of twenty (20+). We will continue to work with His Eminence and seek his guidance. Names that have been put forth are: Blessed Xenia of Petersburg, St Roman the Melodist, St. Herman of Alaska, Protection of the Mother of God (Pokrov), All Saints of North America, Justin the Philosopher, Synaxis of the Archangel Michael and other Bodiless Hosts, Ss Elizabeth and Barbara, St. Job of Pochaev, St. Nektarios of Pentapolis, Great Martyr Catherine, Ss. Joachim and Anna, St. Maxim Sandovich., St. Brendan the Navigator, St. Mary of Egypt, St. John of Kronstadt, St. John of San Francisco, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Maria Skobstova.

2. Creating a website

The group thought the best way to get the message out was to create a website. In March, we contacted Orthodox Web Solutions to create a basic webpage so that we can put our information out there. We utilize the calendar section and have put photos of services and coffee hours. The following are website statistics that indicate we are noticed:

Month	Total Visitors	Visitors per Day	Unique Visitors
April 2023	594	19.8	492
May 2023	370	11.9	302
June 2023	257	8.6	225
July 2023	258	8.3	231
August 2023	400	12.9	339
September 2023	410	13.7	316
October 2023	39	11.7	37
	2,328		1,942

3. Placing ad in local newspapers

We have placed monthly ads in the "Sun". This local newspaper has the largest circulation in Plattsburgh and its environs. We were able to get a core group of people from this publication. We also placed ads in the Lake Champlain Weekly. This publication was costly and we did not get any inquiries despite it being an arts and entertainment publication. We discontinued placing ads in the Weekly.

4. Placing of posters

We had professional posters made about our mission station. Everybody took at least one poster and they were placed in various public places in Plattsburgh and its environs.

5. Creating a bank account and online donations

Because we are a mission station, we decided to create a separate account under St. Nicholas Church in Cohoes. To date we have over \$2,000.00 in our account. We are in the process of activating Tithe.ly, so that members can make online donations.

6. Archbishop Michael's visit Saturday, August 19th

His Eminence Archbishop Michael visited the Plattsburgh Mission Station and served a beautiful divine liturgy for the 30 faithful gathered there (21 "regulars" and their families and 9 visitors). He offered words of encouragement for the growing mission in Plattsburgh and has dedicated the community to the Theotokos for her prayers and intercession for continued growth and development. His Eminence offered continued support to have an Orthodox presence in Plattsburgh by ensuring there will be a priest to serve and a place to worship, but the growth of the church community is in the hands of the faithful. The people need to invite others to "come and see" each time there is a liturgy offered.

After a delicious fellowship meal Archbishop Michael took questions from anyone who had one. The first question was about naming the church community and if he had a patron saint or feast day in mind for us. He said he did not because whenever he's offered a suggestion, the

group had something else in mind! His advice was to think of something relatable by the community at large, nothing too ethnic sounding, and not too common for an Orthodox church in the Northeast, such as Ss. Peter and Paul or St. Nicholas.

Another question about having an ordained seminarian sent to Plattsburgh to help grow the church from the ground up having weekly services was asked. Archbishop Michael said there would need to be a job for the priest or his wife so there would be a steady income.

Archbishop Michael suggested having speakers come and inviting the Plattsburgh community and students from the university. His Eminence also said that he will check his schedule to see if he was available to come for a Divine Liturgy during the Christmas season.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest Terenti Wasielewski